

C I R C U SH I S T O R I C A LS O C I E T YNote Sheet No. 18May 15th, 1945.

W.W. Cole's Great New York and New Orleans Zoological and Equestrian Exposition - as described in an original newspaper write up when the show played RUTLAND, Vt., on Tuesday, August 10th, 1875.

Circus Day with its bustle and stir has come and gone, and the town is quiet again. Early Tuesday morning, with the arrival of the sideshow wagons, the interest began and it increased till the hour of the procession, when the streets were thronged with a crowd eager to see the splendors provided for them.

The procession was a continuous line of glittering splendors and embodied many novelties. The steam piano attracted the attention of everyone, and the large open den containing Zingra, the African and his monster serpents was followed by curious crowds, as was the open den containing Prof. Conklin and his performing lions and leopards.

Among the many novelties in the procession was the band chariot drawn by twelve dromedaries richly and tastefully caparisoned. A gay cavalcade of ladies and gentlemen mounted on fine horses and tastefully costumed was followed by a long line of cages, elephants, chariots, ponies, etc. The ascension of Prof. Bristol in his balloon "City of New York" a few moments previous to opening of the doors for the afternoon entertainment. After the ascension, the handsome young funambulist M'lle Christine, essayed the difficult feat of ascending on a single wire, from the ground to the top of the center pole, and returning. This she accomplished successfully and amid the hearty plaudits of the people.

In the afternoon, and also in the evening, from the time of opening the doors until long after the performance commences, the rush at the ticket wagon was immense, and the pavilions were crowded to their utmost capacity. The performances were in every way exceptional and embodied many novelties, we had never seen introduced in the ring.

Among them - the bounding Jockey Act of Mr. Van Zandt is one of the most expert and daring exhibitions of equestrianism we have ever witnessed. Dressed very stylishly as an English Jockey, he stands on the ground and leaping, as his horse passes him at full speed, alights with his feet on the horse's back. This and many more new and difficult feats won for him the most enthusiastic applause from the audience. The Milson Jaspers are extraordinary gymnasts, and introduced many daring and thrilling features, and the wonderful five horse act of young Leon is very fine. Grimaldi Adams is a very funny clown and one of the best leapers in the profession. He established himself at once as a favorite with the audience. One of the most interesting features of the entertainment was the extraordinary leaping of Mr. William Batcheldor who after a short run to the spring board turns first a single and then a double summersault over twenty-two horses! We have but little space here to speak of the remainder of the performance, including the beautiful equestrian act of Miss Minnie Marks; the fine side-saddle act of M'lle Rosa; the comical ponies in their teetering feat, etc. The menagerie, the wax figures of Beecher, Tilton and Mrs. Tilton came in for their share of observers.

A large sized newspaper ad for the same show when they played at Burlington, Vt., on Saturday, August 14th, 1875, shows ten large woodcuts of especial interest, in view of the above article. One of them shows the open den in which Conklin rode in the parade; the open den of monster serpents and also two cuts showing an act similar to the one performed by Blacaman just a few seasons ago on the Hagenbeck-Wallace Show (1938). Also illustrated are Tapirs in their native haunts; the "ascension" to the top of the tent by M'lle Christine; the "parisian Steam Calliope"; a monster coiled serpent and a cut showing some seals on ice. The two large cuts in the central section of the ad are the tapirs and also a most interesting picture showing "THE MECHANICAL WONDER - the Only Steam Man", who actually walks and runs alone, the Greatest Invention of Modern Times, and to be seen in the large tent without extra charge". The ad mentioned is 24" high and 7 columns wide!

May 15th, 1945.

1945 RINGLING - BARNUM CIRCUS PARADE
by Robert D. Good - CHS

Circus history was made on the beautiful sunny morning of Monday, April 9th, 1945, - when for the first time in a quarter of a century the Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Combined Shows gave a circus parade through the mid-town streets of New York City.

Unheralded and little publicized, the parade was viewed by a comparatively small audience of those fortunate enough to be along the line of march and even at Times Square it was possible to find room along the curbstone to view the parade, which was staged to give an auspicious and unusual opening to the 7th War Bond Drive.

The parade lined up on West 49th Street beside Madison Square Garden with Geo. Smith, General Manager of the show and his assistant, Ed. Kelly and Pat Valdo directing operations.

Led by 6 mounted New York City Police, the parade started down 8th Ave., at 10:15 a.m. Heading the parade, and drawn by 4 Clydesdales was the venerable "Five Graces" Bandwagon, oldest and most widely travelled circus wagon in existence. This same wagon was built about 1878 for the Forepaugh Circus and later was acquired by Barnum & Bailey Greatest Show on Earth, who took it on their European Tour from 1898 to 1903. During these years it served as the lead Bandwagon with the World Famed 40 HORSE TEAM and rumbled down the streets of most of the important cities of continental Europe.

This ancient wagon beautifully done in light green and silver leafed figures was a sight for sore eyes, and brought back nostalgic memories of happy boyhood days. From Merle Evans' Band atop the wagon blared forth snappy circus music which made the gayly plumed Clydes step snappily along.

Other old wagons appearing in the parade included the "Lion and Gladiator" Bandwagon with Band atop, and drawn by 4 Percherons, also the old "Lion and Snake" Bandwagon with clowns atop, and drawn by 4 Percherons. There was also a large den of Polar Bears drawn by 4 Percherons. Clown Emmett Kelley sat atop the little "India" tab. drawn by four ponies. Two Chariots drawn by 4 horses and the small H-W Calliope drawn by 2 horses completed the horse-drawn pieces in the parade.

There were several sections of mounted riders, two circus trucks drawing two cage wagons each, two more circus trucks, drawing flat wagons with each wagon having about 25 circus beauties dressed in their "Changing of the Guard" kilts, seated around the outer edge of the wagons. A section of about 12 elephants completed the features of the parade with the Calliope of course bringing up the rear.

All wagons had dual rubber tired wheels instead of the old sunburst wooden wheels. Gone also were the six, eight and ten horse teams and the old time "rumble" of the wagons which are indelible memories of the parades which emanated from the old Madison Square Garden 25 years ago, and more.

My only regret is that more of you who could have enjoyed this short lived "return to boyhood days" did not have the opportunity of seeing the "parade out of the past". Let us hope there may be more Circus Parades, for the world needs their tonic effect more than ever before.

(Advertisement)

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DON SMITH

Box 246,

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1945 RINGLING-BARNUM PARADE

18 clear, assorted Post Card size views of the first circus parade on downtown New York Streets in 25 years. Views of "Five Graces", "Gladiator", "Lion and Snake" Bandwagons, Calliope, open dens, chariots, elephants, and other features of parade held April 9th, 1945.....

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Order from:

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